



VINAYAKA MISSION'S RESEARCH FOUNDATION

(Deemed to be University under section 3 of the UGC Act 1956)

BEST PRACTICE - 2

1) Title: Fostering Social Responsibility & Community Engagement

2) Objectives of the practice:

- To bridge the gap between theory and practice through community engagement;
- To promote deeper interactions with local communities for identification and solution of real-life problems faced by the communities in a spirit of mutual benefit;
- To learn local knowledge and wisdom through building partnerships with local communities;
- To engage with local communities in order to make curriculum, courses and pedagogies more socially appropriate to achieving the goals of national development;
- To facilitate acquisition of values of public service and active citizenship amongst students; and
- To undertake community based research projects.

3) The Context:

Meaningful social engagement is an integral component of holistic education. The second UNESCO Conference on Higher Education held in Paris in 2009 emphasised that Higher Education has the social responsibility to enhance our understanding of multifaceted issues and our ability to respond to them through teaching, research and service. The government is also advocating learning through community engagement or service where the students get opportunities to learn our societal issues, values and practical wisdom from the community. The society too gets benefited from the students' participation in community welfare activities. It is often perceived that the education system works in isolation, and has little social and practical value.

The VMRF believes in providing holistic education and encourages constituent institutions to explore Linking learning with community service; Linking research with community knowledge; Knowledge sharing and knowledge mobilization; Devising socially relevant curriculum and courses; and Social innovations by students.

"Education is not in isolation but with the people with a win-win situation".

4) The Practice:

VMRF (DU) believes that the University's role is not just restricted to provide knowledge and skill based education to the students but moulding them to be the responsible citizens. It has strong conviction on responsibilities as an agent for social change and encourages the institutions to address and find solutions to social issues. It has the commitment to show the path through its own example and takes the leadership role defending the ideals, responsibilities and objectives of a socially responsible academic institution. The VMRF's institutes have ISR Cell consisting of:

- NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME (NSS)
- NATIONAL CADET CORPS(NCC)
- RED RIBBON CLUB (RRB)
- UNNAT BHARAT ABHIYAN (UBA)
- SOCIAL ENTREPREUNERSHIP, SWACHHTA & RURAL ENGAGEMENT CELL (SES REC) approved by MGNCRE, MoE, Govt.of India
- RURAL ENTREPREUNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CELL
- ROTARACT CLUB

The following practices shows the university's commitment on Social Responsibility & Community Engagement

a) **Linking learning with community service:**

In this approach, students and teachers apply their knowledge and skills in a chosen community to improve the lives of people in that community. This is achieved through the model of 'service-learning' (a globally accepted best practice), providing engagement opportunities to students from various disciplines and courses to apply their knowledge to address the challenges of a specific community.

b) **Linking research with community knowledge**

In this approach, various faculties and programmes of VMRF (DU) devise joint research projects in partnership with the communities and local agencies. This is an attempt to address the local issues through partnership research.

c) **Knowledge sharing and knowledge mobilization**

The knowledge available with students and teachers in various disciplines of VMRF(DU) is made available to the local community to realize its developmental aspirations, secure its entitlements and access its benefits from various agencies and schemes.

d) **Devising new curriculum and courses**

VMRF (DU) encourages development of new curricula in existing courses as well as design new courses to improve community participation. This enriches the curriculum

of existing courses through locally-appropriate subject-matter. It also creates new locally appropriate educational programme that is of interest to new generation of students.

e) Social innovations by students

The students are encouraged to take up projects with a social impact. Incubation of such social innovation projects by students can also have meaningful links to existing curriculum and courses. Some competitions for social innovation are being organized and it should be integrated into the curriculum.

5) Evidence of Success:

The Examples of achievement of the Fostering Social Responsibility & Community Engagement initiative:

a) Linking learning with community service:

- Design, construction of 207 toilets, Gram Vyaapaar App, Seed Balls Equipment, Solar PV generation
- House hold survey, Village Development Plan, Gram Sabha Meeting
- Department of Public Health Dentistry, Optometry

b) Linking research with community knowledge

Smart Irrigation System using IOT, Automatic Manure Spreading Machine for Agriculture using IOT, Automatic Germicide Herbal Spray, Preventive Women's Safety App.

c) Knowledge sharing and knowledge mobilization

Some of the activities includes Medical and health Camps, Women Self Défense training, Swachh Bharat and Pakhwada, renovation work, Telemedicine, Covid-19.

d) Devising new curriculum and courses

Community medicine/health nursing, MBA programme specialisation in Rural, Agri business, Entrepreneurship, Start-ups courses, Credit for ISR and Swachh Bharat Summer Internship, PMKVY-TI Skill development programme

e) Social innovations by students

More than 10 innovations include V2 BUDDY - The Nursing Robot, Technology enhanced medical organ box, Voice Assisted Petra Wheel Chair, High Frequency Induction Heater etc.

6) Problems Encountered and Resources Required :

- Local Political leaders are expecting to be invited for all the activities.
- Government officials are not giving timely approval for conducting camps at Schools and Villages.
- Parents are showing concern about their wards to go to villages for field visit.
- Acceptance from researchers who see their core activities in experimental (lab based) research and teaching and have no time for anything else.

- Faculty and staff felt that ISR is not a priority. After introduction of weightage in API, the involvements are high.
- Caste problems are another barrier for conducting activities and camps at villages.
- Impact of research publications with social engagement is low.
- Commitment of faculty and staff.

Resources Required

- 1) Dedicated Team for plan and execution
- 2) Human Resources – Faculty and staff for coordination, Students for execution
- 3) Funding from University, NGO and Government
- 4) Logistics
- 5) Linkages and collaboration
- 6) Policies for ISR